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HOG SLAUGHTERINGS IN SPECIFIED COUNTRIES, PRELIMINARY 1946 and PROSPECTIVE 1947

Commercial or inspected hog slaughter in the United States and in countries associated with the United Kingdom market will show but little if any increase in 1947 over 1946, according to reports summarized by the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations. Slaughter in such countries in 1946 is expected to aggregate only 2 percent above prewar average as the higher level of slaughter in the United States has been nearly offset by a reduction of about one-third in other countries associated with the United Kingdom market. 1/

In 1947 Argentina, and possibly Canada, will have further reduced hog slaughter upon which the United Kingdom can draw, and supplies from Denmark will show only a small increase. Supplies from the Balkans and Poland formerly available to the United Kingdom and western Europe will be lacking in 1947 as in recent years.

With favorable grain production in 1946 now assured or in prospect in many countries, the feed grain situation for the next year is expected to ease in comparison to the first half of 1946. This cannot, however, be reflected in increased hog slaughter for some time. Even in the United States increased breedings for spring farrowing will not be reflected in greater slaughter before early fall of 1947. It is doubtful if slaughter in other countries will be increased materially before 1948 and then only moderately.

The United Kingdom market, which is the principal outlet for pork and pork products entering world trade, had fairly ample supplies to draw upon in 1944 when slaughter was at record levels in the United States, Canada, and Argentina. Hog production and slaughter in these countries through 1944 had been greatly stepped up as a result of the expanded wartime demand for meat and large supplies of feed grains. After 1944 grain prices rose as supplies were depleted and it became advantageous for farmers to sell grain in preference to feeding hogs. Inspected slaughter in these three countries dropped nearly 32 million head by 1946.

The depleted world grain reserves not only reduced hog production in the United States, Canada, and Argentina, but prevented a prompt restoration of production in Denmark, Netherlands, United Kingdom and other countries dependent upon imported feed supplies. Immediately after the end of the war, breedings were stepped up in these countries, but as grain supplies became exhausted some reversals became necessary.

1/ United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Eire, Denmark, Netherlands, South Africa, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand are grouped for discussion.

Commercial hog slaughter figures for eastern, central and southern European countries are not available for either the war years or the post-war period. According to reports, these countries show a very limited recovery in hog numbers because of deterioration that occurred to breeding herds during the war, shortage of feed grains, disease, requisitions by occupying troops and reparations in some countries.

Inspected hog slaughter in the United States in 1947 is expected to be above that for 1946 because of delayed marketings in the last quarter of this year and because a larger proportion of the total supply may move through inspected channels in the second half of next year. Total slaughter for 1947, however, may be below 1946 on account of a probable 15 to 20 percent reduction in the 1946 fall pig crop which will be only partly offset by delayed marketings of 1946 spring pigs and a possible increase in the 1947 spring pig crop which will be marketed in the fall and winter of 1947-48. The reduction in slaughter from April through September 1947 will reflect the reduction in the 1946 fall pig crop resulting from short grain and feed supply situation in the first half of 1946. With the record 1946 grain crops now assured in the United States, some return in hog production is expected. Inspected slaughter in 1947 is expected to be about one-fourth greater than the relatively low average for 1934-38, but will be 25 million head below the record slaughtering in 1944.

Canada's downward trend in hog production is beginning to level off and only a slight decrease is reported in the number of sows expected to farrow in 1947. It is anticipated, therefore, that 1947 inspected slaughter may be nearly as high as the 1946 estimate of 4,225,000 head. High wheat prices, less labor involved in wheat production, and wartime income taxes are factors that have influenced the shift away from pork production. Hog feeding is regarded by the farmers as extra work coming before and after regular working hours, and because of the income tax there is little incentive to perform this extra labor. Estimated slaughter of 4.2 million head for 1946 is approximately 25 percent lower than the 1945 figure.

According to the June 1 census, the Western Provinces have all indicated decreases in the number of sows expected to farrow in 1946, but this is largely offset by substantial increases in the Eastern Provinces. With 1946 farrowings remaining at about the same level as 1945, it is expected that 1946 farrowings will be reflected in 1947 marketings, and will tend to maintain 1947 slaughter at a level practically comparable to 1946.

Better than normal grain crops in Mexico during this year assure the swine industry in that country of an improved outlook for 1947. In view of a greatly improved feed situation, it is anticipated that the inspected slaughter for 1947 will at least hold the level attained in 1946, and possibly show a slight increase. Heavy marketings during the latter part of 1945 and early 1946 are attributed partially to liquidation of hogs as a result of short supplies of feed which occurred as a result of the drought in 1945. All yearly inspected slaughtering since 1938 have exceeded the 1934-38 prewar average of 855,000 head.

Commercial hog slaughterings in Cuba are expected to show an upward trend in 1947. Marketings during this year are believed to have increased because of higher prices. Hog breeders encouraged by strong demand, higher prices, and better Cuban-grown feed supplies are expected to increase this fall's and next spring's farrowings.

Shortage of imported feed, limited domestic feed grains and reduction in feed rations in the United Kingdom are expected to decrease the number of hogs sold for slaughter in 1947 to a point below 1946 sales. In July of this year, the Government decided to pay a grant of 4 pounds (about \$16.12) per sow as an adjustment payment to assist pig keepers who have sows farrowing live pigs between August 1 and October 31 of this year. Further liquidation of hogs, however, is anticipated during this fall because of reduced feed rations. Expansion of the industry, previously contemplated, has been postponed by the present feed situation.

Commercial hog slaughter in Eire for 1947 is expected to continue the slight upward trend which began in 1944. Present pork production is at least 50 percent short of effective demand. Any sizeable increase in production cannot be accomplished, until further feedstuffs, particularly corn, are again available in sufficient quantities. Corn imports from Argentina, during the year, have brought some improvement in the feed situation.

A complete reorganization of the hog industry is being contemplated. The primary objective, apparently, is to increase Eire's production and to encourage export trade. If this cannot be accomplished on a profitable basis without a subsidy, it is planned to produce only sufficient quantities to meet domestic requirements.

A slightly improved feed situation and Norway's return toward normalcy points to an upward trend in hog marketings. Controlled hog slaughter for 1947, therefore, is estimated at 100,000 head, as compared with only 5,000 head in 1943 and 337,000 head in the prewar period of 1934-38. The improved feed situation has led to an increase of hog numbers and some importation of sows and feeder pigs from Sweden. It is anticipated that the 1947 slaughter estimate will reflect an increase in the proportion of hogs passing through controlled slaughter channels. During the occupation of Norway, apparently a large number of hogs went into home slaughter channels and controlled hog slaughter dropped rather drastically.

Norway's livestock industry is dependent, to a great extent, on importation of feed grains and protein concentrates. The State Grain Monopoly is constantly negotiating with other nations for such supplies. The Government exercises a rather strict control over importations generally, but in the case of food grains, feed grains and protein concentrates the Government readily permits the use of sufficient exchange to make such purchases.

The count of hogs this spring showed an increase over last year. There has been some importation of sows and feeder pigs from Sweden. The demand for small feeder pigs is good.

Sweden's commercial hog slaughter for 1947 may drop below the 1946 level on account of smaller number of sows being bred due to uncertainty of concentrates and other livestock feed. All concentrates continue to be rationed, and recently subsidy payments on hogs were increased.

Hog slaughter for export in Denmark for 1947 can be expected to maintain the level reached in 1946, and some upturn is possible if domestic and import feed situation improves. Although present prices, increasing wages, and smaller numbers of bred sows can bring about a drop in production, it is believed the importance of the industry in Denmark, recent bacon agreement with the United Kingdom and prospects of improved feed grain situation are sufficient to encourage production at present levels.

Netherland's hog slaughter for 1947 is expected to increase in spite of limited feed supplies which caused the Netherlands Government to order a reduction in the number of breeding sows during July of this year. The reduction was accomplished by curtailing permits issued for keeping breeding sows and by payment of premiums designed to encourage prompt delivery and reduction of lightweight pigs and young sows. The upward trend in hog production will be reflected largely in increased commercial slaughter.

The increase in Belgium's hog numbers and sows bred, during 1946, is expected to reflect greater marketings and increased slaughter in 1947. The upturn in hog slaughter in 1946 reflects an upward trend in total hog numbers and, to some extent, a shift from black-market slaughter to official slaughter. However, if large numbers of hogs shift into regular slaughter channels, the 1947 slaughter estimate, undoubtedly, will be greatly exceeded.

For France, current figures indicative of the trend in hog slaughter are not available. Recent reports indicate, however, that hog numbers are approximately 32 percent below prewar but are increasing as the feed situation is vastly improved over that of last year. Pastures and forage crops generally are excellent and crops of secondary cereals are favorable.

Inspected hog slaughter in Switzerland for 1947 is expected to continue the upward trend begun in 1945. Estimated slaughter for 1947 is approximately one-half of the 1934-38 average. Sufficient breeding stock is on hand to enable fairly rapid recovery, if and when feed situation improves.

Japan's commercial hog slaughter for 1946 has been estimated at 60,000 head, exclusive of black market sales. This indicates an upward trend from 1945, when Japan reached its lowest slaughter level of 40,000 head. Slaughter of breeding stock, shortage of concentrates and other feedstuffs, and general food shortages during and following the war reduced hog production to the present level. Some slight improvement can be anticipated in 1947.

In 1947 commercial hog slaughter in the Union of South Africa is expected to show a decrease of 10 percent from the 1946 level. Although 1947 estimate is lower than 1946, it exceeds the 1934-38 prewar average by over 87 percent. This increase is largely due to the shift from farm slaughter to commercial slaughter beginning as early as 1943.

Commercial hog slaughter in Brazil, according to estimate, was expected to decline to 4.4 million head for 1945, and estimate for 1946 indicates a slight upward trend to 4.5 million head. Commercial slaughter for 1947 may be expected to remain at approximately the same level as 1946. Estimated commercial slaughter for 1946 exceeds the 1934-38 prewar average slaughter by over 34 percent.

Hog slaughter in commercial establishments in Argentina for 1947 is not expected to be maintained at the reduced 1946 level. Reported slaughter for the first 9 months of 1946 and prospects for the remainder of the year indicate a 1946 slaughter of not to exceed 2.5 million head. This is considerably below that for 1945 and only about 60 percent of the record slaughter in 1944. The slaughter in 1946, however, will be double that for prewar.

Notwithstanding an appreciable cutback in early 1945 in the Argentine hog industry, heavy liquidation of breeding stock again occurred in early 1946 because of sharply higher feed costs. Corn prices in the first few months of 1946 were more than double those for a year earlier without a corresponding increase in hog prices. As a result, breeding stock was slaughtered and farrowings and pigs saved for feeding were reduced.

As a result of the new Anglo-Argentine meat contract, some adjustment in hog prices may occur but the anticipation of this is not believed to have resulted in increased breeding in recent months. Reports indicate that the larger hog farmers are inclined to hold off an expansion in breeding until prospects for the next corn crop are apparent.

Marketings in Argentina in the last quarter of 1946 are expected to be about half those of a year earlier. This level will probably continue through the first quarter of 1947. Relatively heavy slaughtering occurred during April to June 1946 and these are not expected to be approached in 1947. While data are not available to indicate farrowings for slaughter in the last half of 1947, it seems apparent that slaughter for the calendar year 1947 will be below 1946.

Commercial hog slaughter in Australia during 1947 is expected to be about 5 percent above 1946, which is estimated at 1,500,000 head. The 1946 slaughter is about 21 percent below the 1934-38 prewar average. Although feed grains remained scarce and prices advanced, the price of hogs remains fixed. If the feed and price situation continues unchanged, hog raisers may tend to shift somewhat to sheep production which is less dependent on feed grains.

Scarcity of feed grains because of the drought in 1944 and the world food situation drastically affected Australian pork production. This production was further curtailed because the milk supply previously used for pig feeding was affected by the drought and by diversion of milk from the butter production to whole milk uses. As a result, extensive liquidation of young pigs has occurred and slaughter weights for the first 4 months of this year were 23 percent below last year for the same period. Breeding stock is being retained and other types of hogs are slaughtered. Notwithstanding recent difficulty, hog production can be expected to increase in the next few years.

For 1947 New Zealand's prospective commercial hog slaughtering will show a slightly increasing trend into the 1947-48 September season with a shift from the heavier wartime baconer to more of the lighter porker type. Although unfavorable drought conditions existed the latter part of 1945 and earlier part of 1946, present reports indicate that excellent winter conditions are encouraging for next season's livestock and crop prospects.

Approved by OFAR Committee on Foreign Crop and Livestock Statistics and by the Outlook and Situation Board, October 1, 1946.

